

II. CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser ~~according to claim 1,~~ comprising:

an active layer made of semiconductor:

a ridge stripe having a cladding layer formed on said active layer and a contact layer formed on the cladding layer to protrude from said active layer;

a pair of gratings each having a periodic structure in a longitudinal direction of the ridge stripe having a plurality of grooves each extending from side walls of the ridge stripe on flat portions in both sides of the ridge stripe; and

absorbing layers covering both surfaces of the grooves of gratings to absorb excited light;

wherein each of said absorbing layer layers comprises a first insulator kept contact with the surfaces of the grooves of gratings; a metal layer contiguously formed on the first insulator; and a second insulator contiguously formed on the metal layer.

3. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser ~~according to claim 1,~~ comprising:

an active layer made of semiconductor:

a ridge stripe having a cladding layer formed on said active layer and a contact layer formed on the cladding layer to protrude from said active layer;

a pair of gratings each having a periodic structure in a longitudinal direction of the ridge stripe having a plurality of grooves each extending from side walls of the ridge stripe on flat portions in both sides of the ridge strips; and

absorbing layers covering both surfaces of the grooves of gratings to absorb excited light;

wherein each of said absorbing layer layers is an insulator layer comprising an insulator material as a matrix and metal particles dispersed in the matrix.

4. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser according to ~~claim 1~~claim 2, further comprising bracket grating portions each having a slope surface extending from a flat top portion of the ridge stripe to a top face of a land portion defined by the adjacent grooves and coupling the side walls of the ridge stripe and the gratings.

5. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser according to ~~claim 1~~claim 2, wherein said active layer is a bulk layer, a single quantum well layer, or a multiple quantum well layer mainly composed of $\text{In}_{1-x}\text{Ga}_x\text{As}_{1-y}\text{P}_y$ (where $0 \leq x < 1$, $0 \leq y \leq 1$); and said cladding layer is made of InP.

6. (Original) A semiconductor laser according to claim 5, wherein said contact layer is made of InGaAsP or InGaAs.

7. (Currently Amended) A semiconductor laser according to ~~claim 1~~claim 2, wherein the ridge stripe and the pair of gratings have a relationship between a waveguide without grating beneath and gratings laterally coupled thereto.

8. (New) A semiconductor laser according to claim 2, wherein the first insulator is formed to have a substantially uniform thickness to make the metal layer conformable to the grooves of gratings.

9. (New) A semiconductor laser according to claim 3, further comprising bracket grating portions each having a slope surface extending from a flat top portion of the ridge stripe to a top face of a land portion defined by the adjacent grooves and coupling the side walls of the ridge stripe and the gratings.

10. (New) A semiconductor laser according to claim 3, wherein said active layer is a bulk layer, a single quantum well layer, or a multiple quantum well layer mainly composed of $\text{In}_{1-x}\text{Ga}_x\text{As}_{1-y}\text{P}_y$ (where $0 \leq x < 1$, $0 \leq y \leq 1$); and said cladding layer is made of InP.

11. (New) A semiconductor laser according to claim 10, wherein said contact layer is made of InGaAsP or InGaAs.

12. (New) A semiconductor laser according to claim 3, wherein the ridge stripe and the pair of gratings have a relationship between a waveguide without grating beneath and gratings laterally coupled thereto.